



US009279658B1

(12) **United States Patent**
Maffett et al.

(10) **Patent No.:** **US 9,279,658 B1**
(45) **Date of Patent:** **Mar. 8, 2016**

(54) **SYSTEM AND METHOD FOR SETTING UP
SECONDARY REFLECTIVE OPTIC**

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(*) Notice: Subject to any disclaimer, the term of this
patent is extended or adjusted under 35
U.S.C. 154(b) by 151 days.

(21) Appl. No.: **13/803,313**

(22) Filed: **Mar. 14, 2013**

(51) **Int. Cl.**

G01B 11/00 (2006.01)

G01B 9/02 (2006.01)

G02B 21/26 (2006.01)

G02B 7/00 (2006.01)

(52) **U.S. Cl.**

CPC **G01B 9/02049** (2013.01); **G01B 9/02061**
(2013.01); **G02B 7/00** (2013.01); **G02B 21/26**
(2013.01)

(58) **Field of Classification Search**

CPC G01B 9/02038; G01B 9/02051; G01B
9/02056; G01B 9/02061; G01B 9/02015;
G01B 9/02049; G02B 7/00; G02B 21/26;
G01M 1/04; G01J 3/0202

USPC 359/871–877, 857–858
See application file for complete search history.

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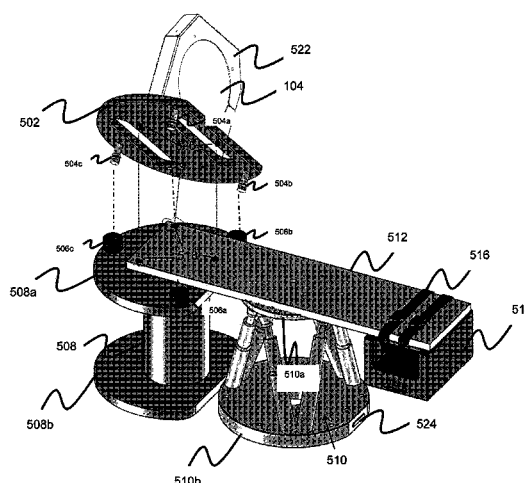
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(57)

ABSTRACT

An apparatus for testing an optical test piece comprising an interferometer for emitting an incident light beam. The apparatus includes a first reflective optic that receives the incident beam and produces a first reflected beam by focusing and expanding the received incident beam. The apparatus also includes a second reflective optic that receives and collimates the first reflected beam and outputs the collimated beam toward the optical test piece. Both the first and the second reflective optics are fixed to their respective positions relative to a thermally insensitive platform and the optical test piece is docked to the thermally insensitive platform and can be removed.

15 Claims, 6 Drawing Sheets



100

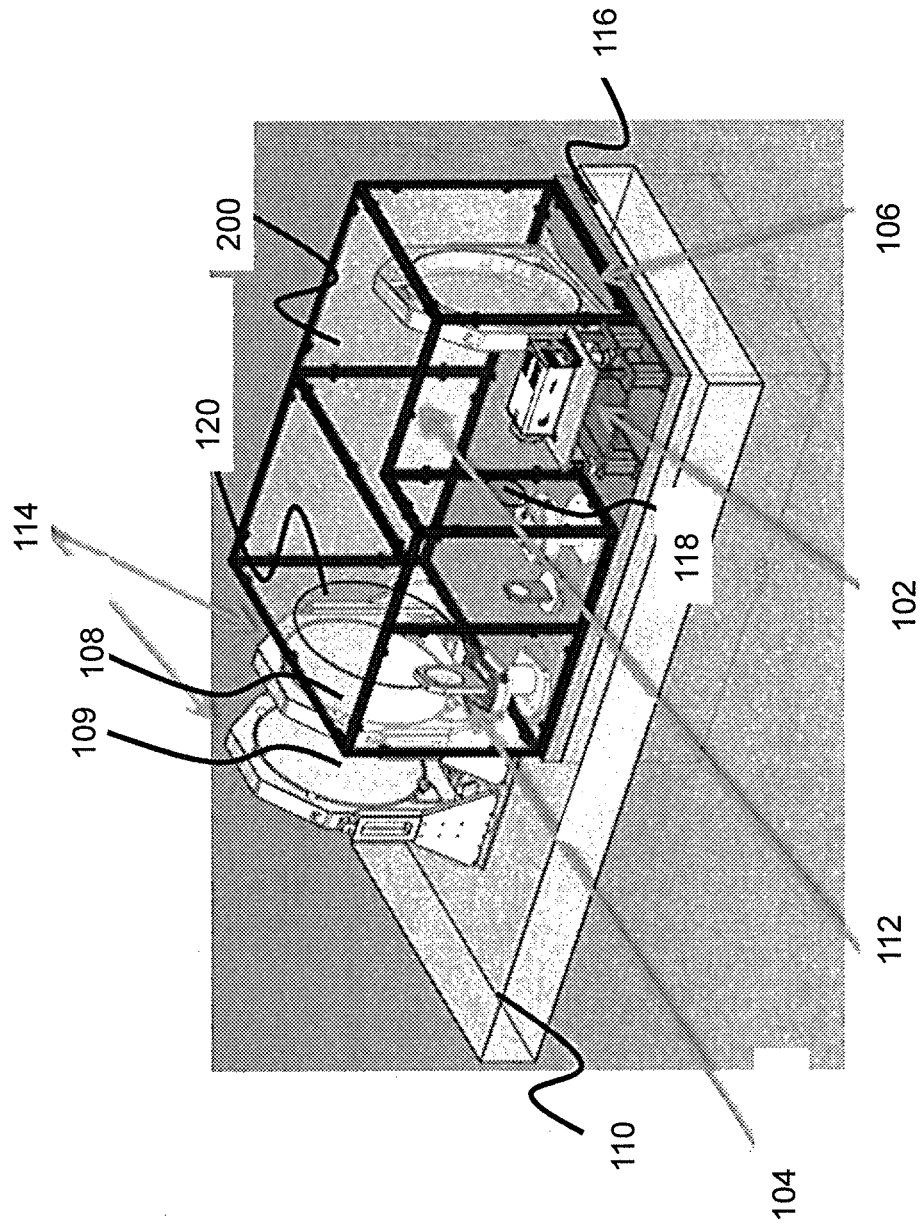


Fig. 1

200

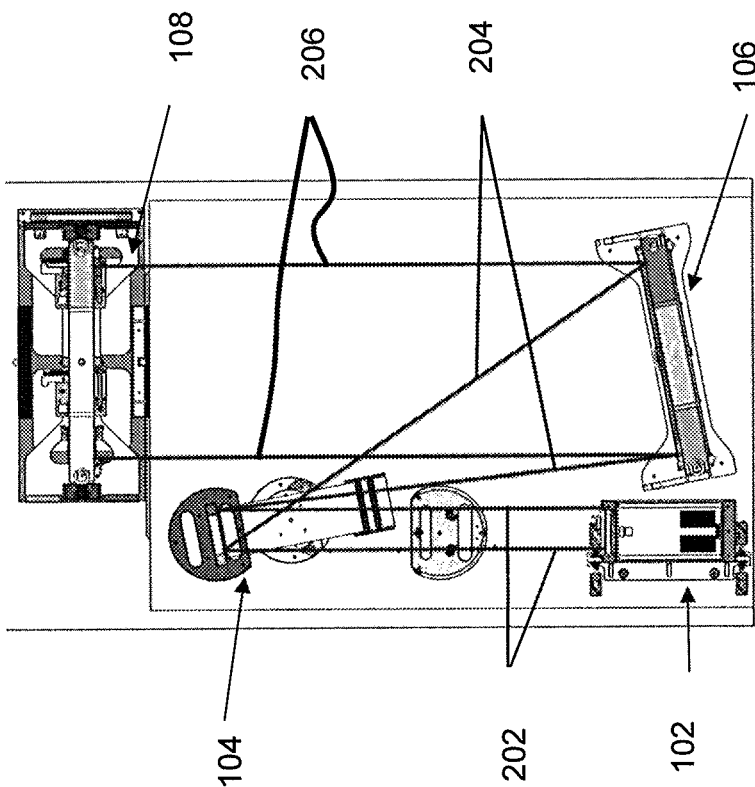


Fig. 2

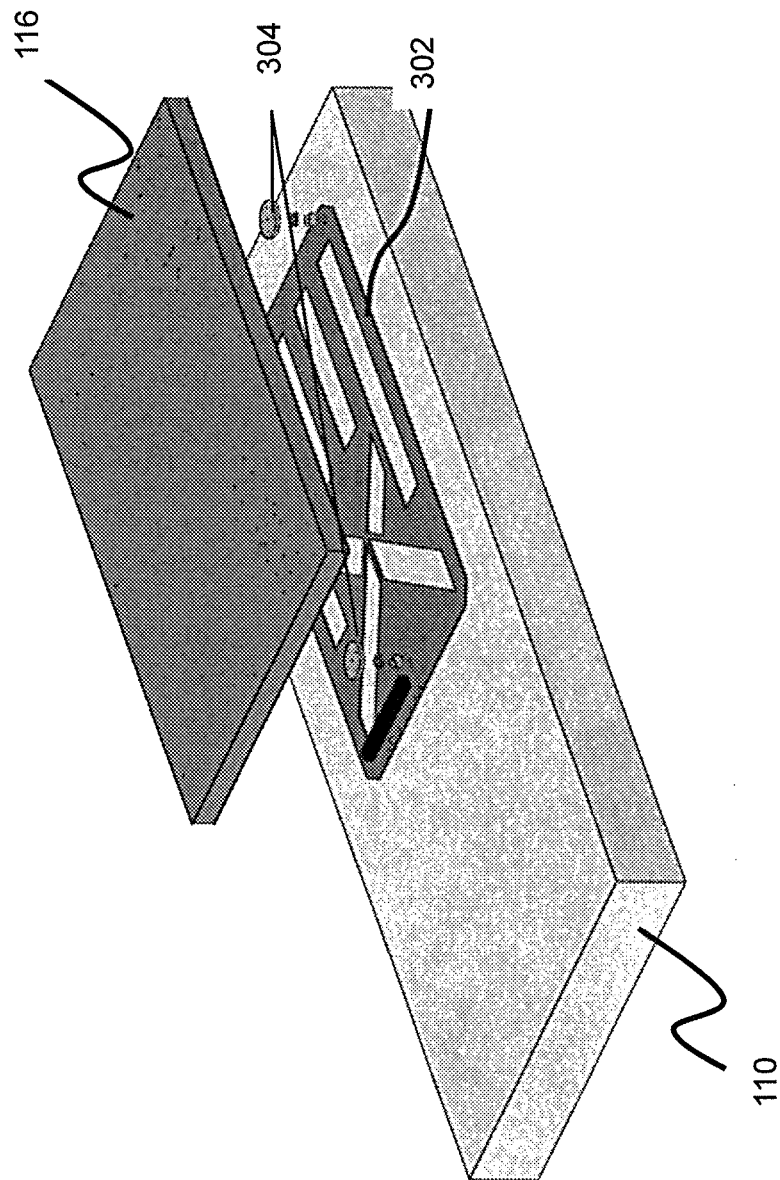


Fig. 3

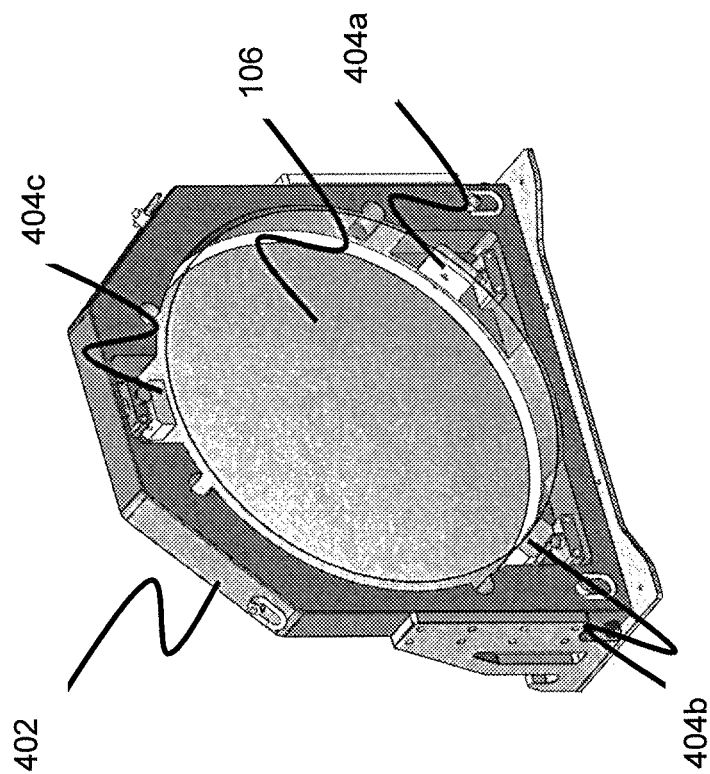


Fig. 4

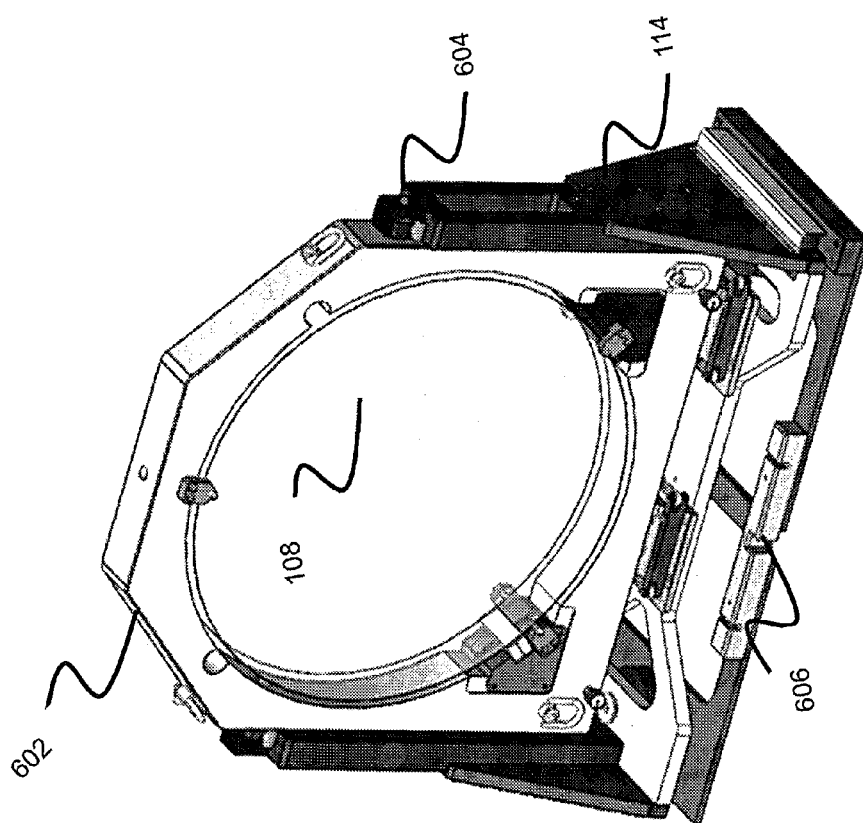


Fig. 6

SYSTEM AND METHOD FOR SETTING UP SECONDARY REFLECTIVE OPTIC

BACKGROUND

Interferometry techniques are used for testing surfaces of optical elements. In one interferometry test configuration, known as a Fizeau interferometer, a plane parallel wavefront is used to test flat optics. There are several such devices available from manufacturers and most commonly have a 4 inch diameter aperture. When a measurement is required on a larger flat, it is often accomplished by coupling one of these common 4 inch Fizeau interferometers to a beam expander.

Commercially available beam expanders are typically made from large refractive elements. One of the purposes of using refractive optics in interferometry techniques is to guide light through the interferometer system. However, refractive optical elements tend to produce beam scattering which degrades the quality of the interferometer output measurements. Moreover, functionalities of refractive optics are dependent on the wavelength of operation. As such, the interferometer system needs to be adjusted for a specific wavelength every time the operational wavelength is changed.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

The invention is best understood from the following detailed description when read in connection with the accompanying drawings, with like elements having the same reference numerals. When a plurality of similar elements are present, a single reference numeral may be assigned to the plurality of similar elements with a small letter designation referring to specific elements. When referring to the elements collectively or to a non-specific one or more of the elements, the small letter designation may be dropped. The letter "n" may represent a non-specific number of elements. Also, lines without arrows connecting components may represent a bi-directional exchange between these components. According to common practice, the various features of the drawings are not drawn to the scale. Also, the dimensions of the various features are arbitrarily expanded or reduced for clarity. Included in the drawings are the following figures:

FIG. 1 is a perspective diagram illustrating an embodiment of the present invention showing a test setup for wavefront measurements.

FIG. 2 is a top-plan view showing a beam expander in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention.

FIG. 3 is a perspective illustrating a beam expander mount platform sitting on a test bed in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention.

FIG. 4. is a perspective diagram showing a non-adjustable mount for mounting a primary mirror according to an embodiment of the present invention.

FIG. 5 is a perspective diagram depicting a setup of a secondary mirror with an auxiliary alignment device in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention.

FIG. 6 is a perspective diagram of a transmission flat mounted on a tip/tilt stage according to an embodiment of the present invention.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

In recent times interferometer systems have been employed for testing optical surfaces. However, testing of optical surfaces with large dimensions has been a challenge. One way to overcome such a challenge is to include a device, such as a beam expander, in the interferometer system which

can expand a narrow incident beam emanating from a light source to a wide beam in order to match the large dimensions of the optics under test. Typically these devices use large refractive optics which facilitate enlarging the beam. For example, in a Fizeau Interferometer including a beam expander with refractive optics may be used to expand a beam from 4" to 12"-32". Moreover, the refractive optic components in the beam expander typically have mechanically adjustable features to enable alignment of the system.

However, refractive optics are inherently dispersive. That is, their optical responses change with respect to wavelengths. As such, the operation of these large beam expanders is limited to a specific wavelength for a given alignment resulting in additional and frequent alignments for different wavelengths of operation. Large refractive optics also often have issues with polarization-dependence and birefringence, which can cause problems in the interferometric measurements. Additional problems may arise with drift in alignments, for example, when large test optics with different weights are introduced on a test bed in the interferometer system. Drifts in alignments also occur when the adjustable mounts for the refractive optics, required for adjusting the system alignment for different wavelengths, are thermally sensitive and tend to drift in position over time due to temperature variations. Moreover, typically each of the refractive optical components has its own adjustable mount leading to an increase of the overall cost of the system.

The present invention overcomes the issue of wavelength sensitivity and polarization sensitivity by replacing refractive optics with reflective optics in the beam expander of the interferometer system. The present technology also addresses the alignment issues described above by using a beam expander on a thermally insensitive platform. The platform interfaces kinematically with the test bed on which the interferometer system resides mitigating issues with weight variations of the optical test piece. Lastly, concerns related to cost and drifts with adjustment stages are addressed by eliminating adjustments in the final interferometer setup.

Thus, the present invention lends itself to instantaneous and highly precise interferometry by including reflective optics and optical mounts with novel features.

FIG. 1 provides a view of an embodiment of the invention illustrating an interferometer test setup 100. The setup 100 includes an interferometer 102, a secondary mirror 104, a primary mirror 106; and a reference flat 109 and a transmission flat 108 mounted on tip/tilt stages 114. The secondary mirror 104 and the primary mirror are inside an enclosure 112, whereas, the interferometer 102, and the reference and transmission flats and the tip/tilt stages 114 are outside the enclosure 112. The interferometer 102, the secondary mirror 104, the primary mirror 106 and the enclosure 112 sit on a beam expander mount platform 116. The secondary mirror 104 and the primary mirror 106 constitute a beam expander 200. All the optical components, stages, platforms both inside and outside the enclosure 112 reside on a test bed 110.

The interferometer 102, at the input of the beam expander may be a Fizeau interferometer, for example. The interferometer 102 may be other interferometers (but not limited to), such as Twyman-Green interferometer, or Shack-Hartman wavefront sensor, for example. In the discussion that follows, implementation of a Fizeau interferometer will be considered but the same principles apply to the implementations of the other interferometers mentioned above. During a test operation, the interferometer 102 in conjunction with the beam expander 200 using the test setup 100 collect results of large aperture optics. The beam expander 200 receives a narrow incident beam from the interferometer 102 through a cut-out

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window **118** in the enclosure **112**. The incident beam interacts with the reflective optics (secondary mirror **104** and the primary mirror **106**) of the beam expander **200** and expands before it exits through another cut-out window **120** to reach the reflecting reference and test pieces such as the reference/ transmission flats **108** along a path. The enclosure **112** may provide thermal isolation for the beam expander **200** from a variation in the atmospheric temperature. This enclosure also limits air turbulence within the path of the beam expander. Reflected beams coming back from the reference/transmission flats **108** along the same path are then processed by the interferometer **102**.

Briefly, in a Fizeau interferometry technique, light reflected from two reflecting surfaces combines constructively and destructively to form interference fringes. One of the reflecting surfaces is a reference surface whereas the other one is a test surface (e.g., see reference and transmission flats **109** and **108** in FIG. 1). The fringes produced from the reflected light may be used to measure the surface profile of the optical test piece. An incident beam directed towards the reflecting surfaces may be expanded through a beam expander in order to match the dimensions of the optical test surface (e.g. see interferometer **102** and beam expander **200** in FIG. 1). Details of an exemplary beam expander **200** are given below.

As detailed above, one of the major concerns of a beam expander using refractive optics is that it tends to have inherent problems such as birefringence. To overcome such issues, the present invention implements a beam expander comprised of reflective optics (mirrors). FIG. 2 is a top-plan view of the beam expander **200**, interferometer **102** and the transmission flat **109**. For clarity, enclosure **112** is not shown. The interferometer **102** is configured to direct incident beam or rays **202** toward the secondary mirror **104** included in the beam expander **200**. The incident beam **202** may be a coherent and collimated beam for example. Alternatively, the incident beam may be a diverging beam, for example. Additional adjustments may be required in the positioning of the reflective optics to account for a diverged incident beam. The incident beam may also have different wavelengths at different times, for example. The present setup is configured to operate in a narrow band of wavelengths centered at 632 nm. For example, a Helium-Neon (HeNe) laser may be used to emit an incident beam. The setup is configured to accommodate wavelengths from 400 nm-1064 nm, for example, without any additional changes in the configuration. The secondary mirror **104** receives the incident beam **202** and is configured to bring the beam to a focus as it reflects it towards the primary mirror. Prior to impinging on the primary mirror **106** the beam is focused and expanded to a size larger than it was at the secondary mirror **104**. In this configuration the secondary mirror may be a concave mirror which may have an off-axis paraboloid shape. Alternatively, the secondary mirror **104** may be a convex off-axis paraboloidal mirror, for example. As such, the reflected beam **204** simply diverges or expands when it is reflected to the primary mirror **106**. The primary mirror **106**, also included in the beam expander **200**, is configured to receive the diverging beam **204** from the secondary mirror **104**. The primary mirror **106** may be a concave off-axis paraboloidal mirror that collimates the diverging beam into a collimated beam **206**, for example. The collimated beam **206** is reflected toward the transmission flat **108**. The beam width of the collimated beam **206** exiting the beam expander is substantially larger than the incident beam **202**. Thus, the beam expander **200** through the reflecting mirrors expands an incident beam. The collimated beam **206** may exit the beam expander **200** along an axis (not shown)

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which is parallel to another axis (not shown) of the incident beam **202**, for example. The primary and the secondary mirrors are aligned in a way such that the beam **206** impinging on the transmission flat **108** is collimated and the wavefront error of the beam **206** is minimized.

The test setup **100** further includes beam expander mount platform **116** on which the beam expander **200** resides. Details of an example platform **116** are provided below.

As discussed above, an interferometer setup may suffer from alignment drift primarily due to adjustable mounts that are thermally sensitive and tend to drift over time. To address such problems, the example interferometer setup **100** includes platform **116** which is thermally insensitive. As such, the beam expander **200** sitting on the platform **116** is not subject to misalignments with the interferometer **102** or with the transmission/reference flats **108/109** due to a temperature variation. The temperature variation may also arise from an atmospheric change in the test environment. For example, the room temperature where the experiment is carried out may vary throughout the day. To compensate for these variations, the materials used in the example platform **116** have a low coefficient of thermal expansion (CTE) enabling the test setup **100** to be completely functional in an environment with temperature variation. In one example, the material used for platform **116** may be Invar™/Carbon Fiber.

Moreover, the platform **116** may be further configured to interface with the test bed **110** kinematically via interface plate **302**. This kinematic interface allows the two surfaces (**110** and **116**) to have different rates of expansion without inducing any strain into the beam expander mount platform. Strain may cause bending of the platform and therefore induce a misalignment within the beam expander. Thus this feature of the platform allows the beam expander to maintain its internal alignment as well as its alignment with the interferometer **102** and the transmission/reference flats **108**. As shown in FIG. 3, the platform is mounted on the test bed **110** by three sets of large hardened Vee locators and receivers **304** (only two are shown). These are doweled to face a center point of the platform **116**. In other words, it is contemplated that the virtual long axis of each vee connects to the center point of platform **116**. Thus, due to this configuration any stress/strain that may be imparted on the optics due to material growth (e.g. thermal expansion) can be eliminated. Hence, the operation of the test setup **100** tends to be repeatable without any additional adjustments.

FIG. 4 is a schematic of the primary mirror **106** mounted in a non-adjustable mount **402**. The non-adjustable mount **402** is a rigid fixture that keeps the primary mirror **106** in a fixed position and is configured to sit on the platform **116**. The fixed positioning of the non-adjustable mount **402** reduces a potential drift in position of the primary mirror **106**, thus minimizing the possibility of a misalignment. This may be advantageous compared to a primary mirror **106** being mounted on a flexible frame that may experience relatively larger drift in position. For example, vibrations of the test bed **110** may cause a shift in position of the primary mirror **106**. However, the non-adjustable mount **402** ensures that the positioning of the primary mirror is minimally affected by the vibration. Thus, in the test setup **100**, the primary mirror **106** mounted on the non-adjustable mount **402** may be used as a reference point for the alignment process.

Furthermore, the non-adjustable mount **402** may be used to mount the primary mirror **106** at the time of testing the mirror during the manufacturing process. The same non-adjustable mount **402** may be used in the setup of the beam expander **200**. By doing so, for example, any effects of strain created in the mirror by the mount during the manufacturing process are

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the same as during the test setup **100**. Thus, all the effects of the strain can be compensated during the final configuration of the mirror. Whereas, if different mounts were to be used for the same primary mirror, additional strain may be introduced to the mirror resulting in uncompensated strain.

A fixed mount, such as the non-adjustable mount **402**, may also cut down the cost of the overall setup by eliminating expensive adjustable mounts and stages for the primary mirror **106**.

Another feature of the primary mirror **106**, as shown in FIG. **4**, may be that it is bonded to mount pads **404a-c**. Although three mount pads are shown, it is contemplated that fewer or more mount pads can be bonded to the primary mirror **106**. The mount pads **404a-c** interface between the primary mirror **106** and the mount **402** allowing the primary mirror **106** to be mounted in the non-adjustable mount **402**, and also dismounted from mount **402**, with ease in a repeatable fashion. Specifically, mount pads **404a-c** ensure that additional strain is not introduced during the mounting and dismounting process.

The mounting pads **404** may be, for example, made from Invar™ (64FeNi) combined with silicone-rubber, for example, room temperature vulcanizing silicone (RTV) such as RTV **566**. The advantage of using such composite materials for the mounting pads **404** is briefly explained as follows. Invar™ has a small CTE, results in substantially small dimensional changes in these composite materials. On the other hand, RTV **566** is physically soft. As such, upon combining together these two different materials, any minute dimensional change in the Invar™ can be absorbed, and thus compensated, by the soft RTV **566** material. Thus, mounting pads made out of the above mentioned composite can minimize thermal strain on the mirror.

FIG. **5** is a perspective drawing providing a detailed view of an assembly of the secondary mirror **104** consisting of a secondary mirror mount **522**, a base plate **502**, potting posts **504a-c** and the secondary mirror **104**. Secondary mirror **104** is mounted in the secondary mirror mount **522**. Mount **522** is affixed to the base plate **502**. The base plate **502** has multiple holes (not shown) through which the potting posts **504a-c** can be attached.

During an alignment process of the reflective optics, the secondary mirror assembly is separated from the base mount **508** by an auxiliary alignment device **510**. The example auxiliary alignment device **510** shown in FIG. **5** is a hexapod, but it could be any other alignment device that allows similar adjustments. A structural member (e.g. bar **512**) is configured to be fixed to the hexapod's top part **510a**. Weights **514** are attached to the bar **512**. The weights **514** act as a counterbalance as the hexapod can only handle a specific amount of weight in an off-axis position. Examples of weights shown in FIG. **5** are two 12 Kg (25 lb) weights, but other weights may be used for counterbalancing. Bar **512** is configured to hold base plate **502** kinematically during alignment via cone (not shown), vee (not shown), flat mounts **518** and balls **526**. The top part of the base mount includes potting cups **506a-c**. Motion of the hexapod **510** may be controlled by a controller (not shown). The hexapod has multiple degrees of freedom of motion. As such, it may hover the secondary mirror **104** assembly over the base mount **508** and potting cups **506**. The controller may be connected to the hexapod **510** via the connector **524**. The hexapod's bottom part **510b** and the base mount's bottom part **508b** are configured to be attached to the platform **116**. Details of the interaction of the potting posts **504a-c** with the potting cups **506a-c** are provided below.

As mentioned earlier, during an alignment process of the beam expander **200**, the primary mirror **106** is used as the

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reference optical component. Thus, the secondary mirror **104** is aligned to the primary mirror **106** using the alignment assemblies as described in FIG. **5**. The fine alignment of the mirrors is accomplished by measuring the wavefront of the beam expander. Using the large transmission flat **108** at the output of the system and a reference flat **109** (e.g. standard commercial off-the-shelf (COTS) flat) mounted to the front of the interferometer **102**, an interference pattern is measured by the interferometer. The secondary mirror **104** is then adjusted until the wavefront error is reduced to an acceptable level.

At first, the primary mirror **106**, mounted on the non-adjustable mount **402**, is positioned at a desired location on the platform **116**. Following that, the secondary mirror assembly is aligned with the primary mirror **106**. The secondary mirror assembly then sits misaligned on the mounts **518** on bar **512**. The bar **512** is positioned between the secondary mirror assembly and the base mount top **508a**. In order to align the secondary mirror assembly to the primary mirror **106**, the hexapod **510** is operated via a controller such that the motion of the hexapod stimulates a movement in the secondary mirror **104** via the bar **512**. The motion of the hexapod **510** helps to adjust the position of the secondary mirror **106**. Particularly, in the adjustment process the potting posts **504a-c** can move around within the oversized potting cups **506a-c**. Once the secondary mirror **104** is properly positioned, or aligned to the primary mirror **106**, the potting cups are then filled with a bonding agent to lock the position of the secondary mirror **104**. The hexapod **510**, bar **512** and weights **514** may then be removed from the setup. Thus, by using a hexapod or other removable auxiliary alignment device **510**, the cost of the overall setup can be kept low. Moreover, because the auxiliary alignment device **510** can be removed after the alignment, no further movement of the optical components is necessary during the test measurements. Thus, the secondary mirror **104** can be aligned to the primary mirror **106** during an alignment process using a removable auxiliary alignment device. The secondary mirror **104** may be aligned when the auxiliary alignment device **510** is at operating temperature.

FIG. **6** shows a transmission flat **108**, or alternatively, a reference flat **109**, mounted on the mount **602**. The mount **602** is mounted on the tip/tilt stage **114**. The tip/tilt stage **114** has a hinge **604** around which the mount **602** can tip or tilt. The hinge allows one axis of tilt whereas the other axis may be enabled by a pin in the bottom (not shown), for example. The stage **114** has a docking feature **606**. The docking feature **606** is designed so that the stage can dock into the platform **116**. By docking the flats **108** and **109** in this way, the positioning of the flats with respect to the beam expander is simplified and the test measurements are repeatable, avoiding any positional drift in the stages.

Although the present invention is illustrated and described herein with reference to specific embodiments, the invention is not intended to be limited to the details shown. Rather, various modifications may be made in the details within the scope and range of equivalents of the claims and without departing from the invention.

What is claimed is:

1. An apparatus comprising:
 - a secondary reflective optic;
 - a reflective optic mount in which the secondary reflective optic is mounted;
 - a base plate affixed to the reflective optic mount, wherein the base plate includes potting posts and alignment balls;
 - a base mount comprising a base mount top, a base mount bottom and potting cups, wherein the base mount top

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comprises the potting cups and the potting cups are configured to receive the base plate potting posts; and a bar located between the base plate and the base mount holding the reflective optic mount, wherein: the alignment balls facilitate alignment of the secondary reflective optic with a primary reflective optic, the bar is configured to hold the base plate during alignment via the alignment balls; and the potting cups are further configured to receive a bonding agent that fixes the position of the base plate to the base mount and fixes the alignment of the secondary reflective optic with the primary reflective optic.

2. The apparatus of claim 1, further comprising: a removably insertable auxiliary alignment device, and wherein the bar is attached to the removably insertable auxiliary alignment device.

3. The apparatus of claim 2, wherein the removably insertable auxiliary alignment device includes a hexapod having multiple degrees of freedom of motion.

4. The apparatus of claim 2, wherein the bar includes a flat mount or a vee configured to accept the base plate alignment balls to kinematically assemble the optical piece.

5. The apparatus of claim 2, further comprising: a weight attached to the bar for counterbalancing when the removably insertable auxiliary alignment device is supporting an off balanced load.

6. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the reflective optic mount is a non-adjustable mount.

7. The apparatus of claim 6, wherein the reflective optic mount comprises: a plurality of mounting pads, wherein each of the plurality of mounting pads is made of a first material with low coefficient of thermal expansion (CTE), and a second material being physically soft such that a dimensional expansion of the first material is absorbed by the second material.

8. The apparatus of claim 7, wherein the first material is 64FeNi and the second material is silicone rubber.

9. The apparatus of claim 1, further comprising: a thermally insensitive platform, wherein the base mount is a rigid fixture and is fixed to the thermally insensitive platform.

10. The apparatus of claim 9, further comprising: an interferometer, wherein the interferometer is coupled to the thermally insensitive platform at a position in which

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an incident light beam from the interferometer follows an optical path to the secondary reflective optic, next to the primary reflective optic, and toward a position configured to hold an optical test piece.

11. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the thermally insensitive platform is made of 64FeNi or a carbon fiber having a low coefficient of thermal expansion.

12. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the primary and the secondary reflective optics are off-axis paraboloidal mirrors.

13. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the secondary reflective optic is configured to receive an incident beam having wavelengths in the range of 400 nm-1064 nm.

14. A method for aligning a test device for an optical piece including the steps of: fixing a primary reflective optic to a predetermined position on a thermally insensitive platform via a non-adjustable mount; maintaining a baseplate of a secondary reflective optic on an alignment bar, wherein: the alignment bar is positioned between the secondary reflective optic baseplate and a top surface of a secondary reflective optic base mount, the secondary reflective optic baseplate includes a plurality of potting posts, and the top surface of the secondary reflective optic base mount includes a plurality of potting cups for receiving respective potting posts of the plurality of potting posts; adjusting a position of the secondary reflective optic with reference to the predetermined position of the primary reflective optic by a removably insertable auxiliary device, wherein the respective potting posts of the plurality of potting posts are movable within respective potting cups of the plurality of potting cups; inserting a bonding agent into the potting cups of the secondary reflective optic based mount to fix the position of the secondary reflective optic relative to the primary reflective optic; removing the alignment bar from the baseplate of the secondary reflective optic to provide an aligned test device.

15. The method of claim 14, wherein the step of inserting the bonding agent locks of the respective potting posts in the respective potting cups to fix the position of the secondary reflective optic relative to the primary reflective optic.

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